

## Message Text

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ACTION NASA-02

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FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS : EAID, NASA, BG

SUBJECT : NASA PROGRAMS AND BANGLADESH

REF : (A) DACCA 0313, (B) STATE 012916, (C) DACCA 0572

1. SUMMARY. DR. ANWAR HOSSAIN (DIRECTOR GENERAL OF BANGLADESH'S LANDSAT PROGRAM AND CHAIRMAN OF BANGLADESH'S ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION ),

MR. M.V. CHOUDHURY (SECRETARY OF THE LANDSAT PROGRAM AND CHIEF CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS) AND DR. NORMAN MACLEOD (FAO AND UNDP) CALLED ON THE AMBASSADOR JANUARY 16 TO EXPRESS THEIR THANKS TO THE EMBASSY, THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, AND NASA FOR TURNING ON THE CAMERAS OF LANDSAT II ON JANUARY 21. THEY ALSO DISCUSSED THE CURRENT STATUS, PLANS, AND REQUIREMENTS OF BANGLADESH'S LANDSAT AND OTHER SATELLITE PROGRAMS. END SUMMARY.

2. THE SATELLITE PHOTOS TAKEN BY LANDSAT II (REF B) WILL BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH A MARITIME SURVEY OF BANGLADESH'S COASTAL RESOURCES BETWEEN THE MEGHNA RIVER AND CHITTAGONG WHICH WAS UNDER WAY AT THE SAME TIME THAT THE SATELLITE PICTURES WERE ACQUIRED. AMONG THE PHENOMENA STUDIED BY THE SURVEY WERE THE RISING OF NEW LAND IN THE NORTHERN BAY OF BENGAL AND EROSION PROBLEMS IN HATIA ISLAND, SANDWIP ISLAND, AND THE MEGHNA ESTUARY. RECENT COASTAL AND RIVER EROSION IS REPORTED BY THE LANDSAT PROGRAM OFFICIALS TO HAVE CREATED AS MANY AS 300,000 REFUGEES IN THE AREA IN RECENT YEARS.

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DR. HOSSAIN EXPLAINED THAT THE BANGLADESH LANDSAT PROGRAM HOPED TO USE SATELLITE PHOTO OPPORTUNITIES IN THE FUTURE TO STUDY FLOODING, CYCLONE, AND GENERAL WEATHER PHENOMENA IN BANGLADESH.

3. BANGLADESH'S CURRENT SATELLITE PROGRAM DEPENDS ON AN AUTOMATIC PICTURE TAKING (APT) STATION AND NASA FACILITIES OUTSIDE OF BANGLADESH FOR DATA ACQUISITION. THE APT STATION WHICH WAS ACQUIRED

IN THE 1960'S WITH NASA ASSISTANCE IS NO LONGER CAPABLE OF ACQUIRING DATA DIRECTLY FROM NASA'S NEWER SATELLITES SINCE THESE SATELLITES BROADCAST THROUGH NEW AND MORE SOPHISTICATED SYSTEMS THAN THE EARLIER SATELLITES USED. BANGLADESH NOW DEPENDS SOLELY ON NASA FOR DATA FROM THE NEWER SATELLITES. THIS USUALLY MEANS A THREE-WEEK DELAY IN DATA ACQUISITION.

4. TO RESPOND TO THE PROBLEMS MENTIONED IN PARA 3, THE BANGLADESH SPACE AND ATMOSPHERIC RESEARCH CENTER (SARC) HAS SET TWO IMMEDIATE GOALS: (1) PROCUREMENT OF EQUIPMENT FOR SATELLITE GROUND STATION OF SARC TO ENABLE PARTICIPATION IN SUCH ADVANCED SYSTEMS AS IR/SR, VTPR, ADVANCED VHRR, TOVS AND SMS/GOES (ESTIMATED COST \$550,000) AND (2) DEVELOPMENT OF IN-COUNTRY AND OVERSEAS TRAINING COURSES TO ENABLE BANGLADESHI SCIENTISTS AND ENGINEERS TO ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN ATMOSPHERIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES WITH EMPHASIS ON NATURAL DISASTERS AFFECTING BANGLADESH (ESTIMATED COST \$675,000). THE FIRST OF THESE PROGRAMS IS PARTIALLY INCLUDED IN AID'S PROJECT REVIEW PAPER (PRP), PROJECT NUMBER 388-0027, FOR TECHNICAL RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SEE PAGES 8-10). THE PRP WAS FORWARDED TO AID/W ON NOVEMBER 4, 1976. A FOLLOW-UP CABLE WAS SENT BY USAID IN FEBRUARY (REF C). THE EMBASSY WILL POUCH TO NEA/PAB A COPY OF A STATEMENT BY SARC OFFICIALS ASSESSING THESE AND OTHER PLANNED PROGRAMS.

5. ACTION REQUESTED. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE A SUMMARY OF THOSE NASA PROGRAMS BEYOND THOSE ALREADY SOUGHT BY USAID WHICH MIGHT ASSIST THE SARC IN FULFILLING ITS IMMEDIATE GOALS. THE LANDSAT OFFICIALS ALSO MADE A REQUEST FOR A NASA MODEL OF THE LANDSAT SATELLITE. IT IS THEIR HOPE THAT SUCH A MODEL COULD BE USED FOR UNCLASSIFIED

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BOTH DISPLAY AND TEACHING PURPOSES. THE EMBASSY REQUESTS INFORMATION CONCERNING THE POSSIBLE ACQUISITION OR DONATION OF SUCH A MODEL. IF ONE IS AVAILABLE, THE AMBASSADOR WOULD PLAN TO PRESENT IT TO CHIEF MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR, GENERAL ZIA, TO DEMONSTRATE US HELP THROUGH LANDSAT.

6. COMMENT: THE EFFORTS TO DATE BY THE BDG'S LANDSAT AND SARC OFFICIALS AND THEIR IMMEDIATE GOALS SEEM TO THE EMBASSY TO CONSTITUTE A PRACTICAL APPROACH TO THE APPLICATION OF SPACE TECHNOLOGY TO THE NEEDS OF A DEVELOPING COUNTRY. THE GOALS OF EXAMINING CYCLONE, FLOODING, AND LAND ACCRETION PHENOMENA PROMISE TO YIELD REAL REWARDS BOTH FINANCIALLY AND IN HUMAN LIVES. END COMMENT. MASTERS

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